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FOR SECRETARY RICE, FOR U/S BURNS, FOR AMB. BOLTON, AND FOR
A/S SILVERBERG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2015

TAGS: [KUNR](#) [IT](#) [UNGA](#)

SUBJECT: AMB. TAHIR-KHELI'S VISIT PRODUCES IMMEDIATE
RESULTS ON UN REFORM

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald Spogli for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary. Amb. Shirin Tahir-Kheli, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State on UN Reform, had meetings with Italian FM Gianfranco Fini, senior MFA officials, and senior officials in PM Berlusconi's office December 12 and 13. Amb. Tahir-Kheli highlighted U.S. reform priorities, stressed the need for action on key reform issues, especially Management Reform, in the next two weeks, and encouraged Italy to speak out on the importance and urgency of UN Reform efforts. FM Fini wrote a front page op-ed on the subject published in La Stampa the day after his meeting with Amb. Tahir-Kheli. MFA and Chigi officials confirmed Italy's commitment to meaningful UN Reform, voiced agreement with the U.S. priorities of Management Reform, establishing a Human Rights Council, and creating a Peacebuilding Commission, and offered to support U.S. efforts to enact reform by the end of the year through bilateral engagement with the Maghreb and Africa. End Summary.

2. (U) December 12, Amb. Tahir-Kheli, accompanied by her deputy, Jane Cowley, Pol M/C David Pearce, and poloff, met with PM Berlusconi's Deputy Diplomatic Advisor Francesco Talo and Counselor Marco Carnelos. December 13, Amb. Tahir-Kheli and Amb. Ronald Spogli, accompanied by poloff, met with Italian FM Fini. Amb. Tahir-Kheli then met with MFA Director General for Political and Multilateral Affairs Giulio Terzi (who flew in to Rome for twelve hours in order to meet with Amb. Tahir-Kheli), UN Coordinator Alessandro Busacca, U/S for Human Rights Boniver's Chief of Staff Rosa Anna Coniglio, and Office Director of the Counter-terrorism Policy Unit Giampaolo Cantini, accompanied by Cowley and poloff.

Management Reform

3. (C) In each of her meetings, Amb. Tahir-Kheli stressed Secretary Rice's commitment to achieving real progress on

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Management Reform before the end of the year, noting in particular U.S. concerns with the lack of accountability, ethics, and independent oversight in the current organization. FM Fini responded that Italy did not want to focus only on UNSC reform, but shared Sec. Rice's view of the importance of wider reform. When Amb. Tahir-Kheli encouraged Italy to speak out bilaterally on UN Reform, FM Fini responded that this would not be a problem--Italy had taken the position that UN Reform was important and would continue to hold it. FM Fini wrote a front page op-ed on Italian UN involvement and commitment to reform, published in La Stampa the day after his meeting with Amb. Tahir-Kheli. The article specifically mentions management, human rights, and peacebuilding as top Italian priorities for reform, ahead of further debate on UNSC expansion. DG Terzi also pledged to send bilateral demarches to Italian Embassies in the Maghreb and Africa in support of UN Reform. On Management Reform, DG Terzi expressed Italy's support for expanded authority for the UN Secretary General and was optimistic that Mandate Review was an issue that could be agreed upon quickly in principle, even if implementation might take more time. Amb. Tahir-Kheli also made the point that Management Reform was a critical issue for Sec. Rice in her meeting with Min. Talo. He noted that Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi was also very supportive of UN Reform.

Human Rights Council

4. (C) FM Fini agreed with Amb. Tahir-Kheli's point that the current Commission for Human Rights served to protect human rights violators and that a new Human Rights Council must do more than simply change the name of the Commission. She also noted the U.S. position that a two-thirds majority vote for membership could keep most bad actors off of the Council. FM Fini agreed and noted that a long-term solution to election problems would be to increase the number of democracies in

the world. Subsequently, Min. Coniglio affirmed that Italy, along with the EU, supports a two-thirds majority vote for membership. Drawing from the U.S. Top Ten Priorities for the Human Rights Council paper, Min. Coniglio noted that Italy was concerned there would be a "protection gap" if the Commission did not meet next year and the Council was not yet up and running. She proposed a final meeting of the Commission in that case. Echoing the EU position, Min. Coniglio noted that Italy supported more than 30 members for the Council and did not support a threshold for membership (although the EU would not block a final agreement if membership for sanctioned countries were the only point of disagreement), instead favoring a formal signed statement by would-be members affirming their commitment to protect human rights. Amb. Tahir-Kheli said she would take the point back to Washington. Min. Coniglio also expressed some doubt that a final agreement on the Council could be worked out in the next two weeks, although she said the current draft was an improvement. In response to Amb. Tahir-Kheli's call for a strong Human Rights Council, Min. Talo noted Italy's concern that development and security issues must be dealt with alongside other UN Reform issues (including Management and Peacebuilding).

Peacebuilding Commission

15. (C) Amb. Tahir-Kheli highlighted the U.S. position that the UNSC has primary responsibility over the Peacebuilding Commission. FM Fini noted that it would be Utopian to believe the General Assembly could consolidate peace and that only the UNSC could ensure the Commission's effectiveness. Min. Busacca noted that an agreement on Peacebuilding might be reached by next week, to which Amb. Tahir-Kheli replied that the United States would need Management Reform to move forward along with the Commission. Voicing concern that some countries might become de facto permanent members of the Commission if membership were left to a vote, Min. Busacca proposed rotating membership for those on the "influential countries" list (Troop Contributing Countries and Financial Donors), with the provision that a country could not serve consecutive terms. Amb. Tahir-Kheli responded that the role of the UNSC and P5 was critical to the work of the Commission. However, she noted the United States had heard similar concerns from other countries. Min. Busacca also noted that ECOSOC, in spite of its problems, and hopefully as a reformed institution, should play an important role in the Commission since the UNSC would not be effective at comprehensive, long-term follow-up to conflicts. Agreeing with the need for a role for ECOSOC, Amb. Tahir-Kheli stressed that it was important for the UNSC to have Commission control when it was "seized with an issue," and that ECOSOC needed to be reformed. Min. Talo mentioned the need to take into account the role of NATO when discussing peacekeeping within the UN context, highlighting the important role NATO played in the Balkans.

----- Comprehensive Convention Against International Terrorism -----

16. (C) Based on conversations earlier in her trip, Amb. Tahir-Kheli noted to all interlocutors the potential for moving forward on a recognition by all that there can be no exception to attacks on innocent civilians for any reason whatsoever. FM Fini noted the difficulties encountered at the Barcelona Conference, where the issue of "occupying forces" had been a problem for reaching agreement on a definition of terrorism. Cons. Cantini agreed that it was important to keep working on a definition of terrorism, in spite of the difficulties, and highlighted the importance of a definition for Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties and other legal issues. He noted the paradoxical multilateral approaches of Egypt, Pakistan, and Jordan, countries which had bilaterally supported efforts to combat terrorism and agreed that voting on the issue at this point would be counterproductive.

UNSC Reform

17. (C) Italy was less focused on Security Council expansion than on previous occasions, with FM Fini highlighting that Italy shared the U.S. view that UN Reform took precedence over UNSC reform. DG Terzi expressed concern that Japan seemed to be linking the UN budget and scale of assessment with UNSC expansion. He also requested clarification on how an "interim budget" would work, stressing the importance of allowing the UN to continue to function. Italy also reaffirmed its position against new permanent UNSC seats, with Amb. Tahir-Kheli reiterating U.S. support for a seat for Japan, while keeping the UNSC expansion debate on hold prior to reaching agreement on general UN Reform priorities. DG Terzi also requested for the United States stay in contact with Italy in the coming months as nominees for UN Secretary

General emerged.

Outreach

18. (U) Amb. Tahir-Kheli held two outreach events in Rome. December 12, she joined Min. Busacca at a roundtable for students at the Italian Association for International Organizations, sponsored by the Italian Diplomatic Institute. December 13, she participated in a press luncheon with representatives of Italy's major newspapers. At both events, Amb. Tahir-Kheli provided a detailed outline of U.S. priorities on UN Reform. Both student and journalist questions focused on UNSC expansion, in particular Italy's bid to keep Germany from obtaining a permanent seat. Reporters also highlighted Italy's proposal for a permanent EU seat on the UNSC. Amb. Tahir-Kheli responded that the United States had made its position clear that we support a seat for Japan and expansion by two or so members, but that this issue was too divisive and polarizing for constructive discussion at the UN at this time while other needed reforms are under active consideration.

19. (U) This cable was cleared by Amb. Tahir-Kheli.
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